

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4940

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USMISSION NEW YORK

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 12859

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ID PO

SUBJECT: VISIT BY PORTUGUESE MINISTER SANTOS

BEGIN SUMMARY

1. MINISTER OF INTERTERRITORIAL COORDINATION ALMEIDA SANTOS VISITED JAKARTA OCTOBER 16-19 BEFORE PROCEEDING TO PORTUGUESE TIMOR. DESPITE HOLIDAYS APPOINTMENTS WERE ARRANGED WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO, MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL PANGGABEAN AND FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK. ACCORDING MALIK'S REMARKS TO AMBASSADOR AND SANTOS' COMMENTS TO PRESS, VISIT WAS SUCCESSFUL FROM GOI VIEWPOINT, SINCE SANTOS SAID GOP REJECTS ALTERNATIVE OF INDEPENDENCE FOR PORTUGUESE TIMOR AND CONSIDERS UNION WITH INDONESIA LOGICAL. END SUMMARY.

2. MALIK CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR OCTOBER 19 THAT SANTOS VISIT WAS SUCCESSFUL FROM INDONESIAN POINT OF VIEW. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, ACCORDING TO MALIK, SANTOS MADE CONFIDENTIAL

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CLEAR PORTUGAL DOES NOT WANT TO KEEP TIMOR, THAT IT

CONSIDERS INDEPENDENCE TO BE "OUT OF QUESTION" AND CONSIDERS UNION WITH INDONESIA LOGICAL STEP. SANTOS ALSO MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER, PORTUGAL STRONGLY DESIRES ORDERLY AND PEACEFUL TRANSITION WITH MAXIMUM OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPRESSION OF PREFERENCE BY PEOPLE OF TIMOR. ACCORDING MALIK, PRESIDENT SUHARTO PLEDGED INDONESIA'S HELP IN PEACEFUL TRANSITION AND INDICATED READINESS TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH PORTUGAL IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF TERRITORY.

3. ALI MURTOPO AIDE LIM BIAN KIE MADE SIMILAR POSITIVE COMMENTS ABOUT CLOSENESS OF GOP AND GOI POSITIONS ON PORTUGUESE TIMOR FOLLOWING MURTOPO'S RETURN FROM LISBON.

4. IN TWO PRESS CONFERENCES DURING JAKARTA VISIT, SANTOS SAID GOP WILL BE GUIDED BY WISHES OF PEOPLE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR IN DECIDING COLONY'S FUTURE, BUT HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON METHOD OR TIMING FOR MAKING THIS DETERMINATION. HE SAID GOP WOULD NOT HURRY TOWARD DECISION, WHICH IN ANY CASE WOULD NOT BE MADE UNTIL AFTER PORTUGUESE GENERAL ELECTION, ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND PASSAGE OF REGULATIONS GOVERNING POLITICAL PARTIES IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. HE SAID HE HOPED DECISION WOULD BE MADE NEXT YEAR, BUT THIS WAS NOT CERTAIN.

A "MINORITY" FACTION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR WAS UNREALISTIC, BECAUSE AN INDEPENDENT TIMOR WOULD BE UNABLE TO STAND ON ITS OWN FEET, AND WOULD BE FORCED TO RELY ON SOME OTHER POWER FOR SUPPORT. THIS WOULD BE TRADING COLONIALISM FOR NEO-COLONIALISM, WHICH COULD THREATEN THE STABILITY AND PEACE OF THE AREA; GOP HAS NO INTENTION OF PERMITTING THIS, AND IS THEREFORE LEANING AWAY FROM SUGGESTION THAT A REFERENDUM BE HELD SOON IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR, SINCE THE POPULACE WOULD HAVE LITTLE TIME UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE FUTURE.

6. TO ILLUSTRATE ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR, SANTOS SAID PORTUGAL SPENDS US \$24 MILLION ANNUALLY ON THE TERRITORY, AND PORTUGAL IS A POOR COUNTRY. HE NOTED THAT BOTH INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA HAVE OFFERED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY. IN SEPARATE COMMENTS TO PRESS, MALIK SAID THE TERRITORY WOULD

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NOT BE A BURDEN TO INDONESIA IF ITS PEOPLE SHOULD DECIDE TO BECOME THE 27TH INDONESIAN PROVINCE, NOTING THAT INDONESIA COULD QUADRUPLE PORTUGAL'S ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION BY SPENDING \$100 MILLION A YEAR ON THE AREA.

7. ONLY STATEMENT BY SANTOS THAT CONFLICTS WITH GOI POSITION ON PORTUGUESE TIMOR WAS HIS REPORTED COMMENT THAT COMMUNIST THREAT IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR HAS BEEN EXAG-

GERATED; GOI HAS BEEN PUSHING THEORY THAT AN INDEPENDENT PORTUGUESE TIMOR WOULD BE POTENTIAL SEALVNG AREA FOR PRC AGENTS AND THAT COMMUNISTS ALREADY ACTIVE THERE. MILITARY BACKED JAKARTA DAILY BERITA YUDHA HAS CARRIED THREE FRONT PAGE ARTICLES DURING LAST TWO WEEKS REPORTING LINKS BETWEEN MAOIST ELEMENTS IN "FRETILIN" (FRENTE REVOLUCION-ARIADO TIMOR LESTE INDEPENDENCE), NOW DESCRIBED AS SUCCESSOR TO THE PRO-INDEPENDENCE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY. REPORTS CLAIM VARIOUSLY THAT SEPTEMBER 17 PROTEST IN DILI AGAINST MERGER WITH INDONESIA WAS ORGANIZED BY FRETILIN WITH HELP OF CHINESE PRC AGENTS AND PORTUGUESE STUDENT COMMUNISTS FROM LISBON BASED MOVIMENTO REORGANIZATIVO DO PROLATORIDADO PORTUGUESE (MRPP). ONE REPORT ACCOMPANIED BY PHOTOGRAPHS OF MAOIST LITERATURE IN PORTUGUESE ALLEGEDLY DISTRIBUTED IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

8. COMMENT: SANTOS' REPORTED REJECTION OF INDEPENDENCE FOR PORTUGUESE TIMOR AND STATEMENT THAT UNION WITH INDONESIA IS "LOGICAL" INDICATE GOI HAS MADE PERSUASIVE CASE FOR ITS DESIRE TO ABSORB THE COLONY INTO INDONESIA AS ONLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO DECOLONIZATION. ARRANGING TRANSITION IN WHICH THERE IS A SUITABLE EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR THIS OUTCOME BY PORTUGUESE TIMORESE, OF COURSE, REMAINS UNRESOLVED PROBLEM.

9. EMBASSY BELIEVES REPORTS OF WIDESPREAD COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR ARE EXAGGERATED.
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